

Message Text

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SUBJECT: COUNTRY PLAN ESSAY

REF: USIA 8687; REYKJAVIK 0338, USIA 6048 CIR. USIA 3750 CIR.

1. THE OVER-RIDING BILATERAL FACTOR LINKING THE UNITED STATES WITH ICELAND IS THE JOINT DEFENSE AGREEMENT UNDER WHICH AMERICAN MILITARY PERSONNEL, WHO MAKE UP THE ICELAND DEFENSE FORCE (IDF), MAN AND OPERATE THE NATO BASE AT KEFLAVIK, A VIRTUALLY SELF-CONTAINED AMERICAN COMMUNITY OF SOME 3000 MILITARY PERSONNEL AND 2000 DEPENDENTS. OBSTACLES TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE A HERITAGE OF ICELANDIC NATIONALISM, GEOGRAPHIC ISOLATION AND THE LIMITED EXPERIENCE IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY MATTERS OF SOME INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS. A VOCAL AND DETERMINED MINORITY HAS OPPOSED THE PRESENCE OF THE IDF AND ICELAND'S MEMBERSHIP IN NATO FROM THE OUTSET FOR REASONS OF BOTH POLITICS AND CULTURAL NATIONALISM. IN 1971 AND 1974 THIS GROUP CAME CLOSE TO FORCING THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE IDF AND THE CLOSING OF KEFLAVIK BASE. HOWEVER, A LARGER GROUPING CENTERED AROUND MORE MODERATE POLITICAL PARTIES PRESENTLY CONTROLS THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT AND GENERALLY SUPPORTS THE TERMS OF THE JOINT DEFENSE AGREEMENT. THE BASE IS DIVORCED FROM DAY-TO-DAY ICELANDIC LIFE. IT IS SURROUNDED BY A PSYCHOLOGICAL WALL CREATED BY THE ICELANDERS THEMSELVES WHO

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HAVE A DEEP SEATED AVERSION TO ANYTHING MILITARY AND MARKED RESERVATION, EXCEPT IN THE CONSUMER AREA, TO ANY FOREIGN INFLUENCE. ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLE IS THE WIDELY-HELD PERCEPTION OF AMERICA AS A MATERIALISTIC CONSUMER SOCIETY. THERE IS ALSO THE MATTER OF ICELANDIC CONCERN OVER LARGE MULTINATIONALS SIMPLY BECAUSE OF THE SIZE OF THE FIRMS AND THE ISSUE OF FOREIGN CONTROL.

2. ASSETS WE HAVE IN ICELAND INCLUDE INSTITUTIONS WHICH LINK AMERICANS AND ICELANDERS SUCH AS NATO, THE UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND, RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS, MAYO CLINIC ALUMNI, SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE ICELANDIC-AMERICAN SOCIETY. MANY ICELANDERS HAVE HAD U.S. TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE. SIMILARLY MANY AMERICANS HAVE STUDIED AND TAUGHT IN ICELAND UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF VARIOUS EXCHANGE PROGRAMS. ICELANDERS LIVING IN AMERICA MAINTAIN CLOSE TIES WITH RELATIVES HERE. WESTWARD-ORIENTED ICELAND SHARES WITH THE U.S. THE VALUES OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS, AND PROFOUND RESPECT FOR INTELLECTUAL AND ARTISTIC ACHIEVEMENTS. ENGLISH IS WIDELY SPOKEN HERE. THE UNITED STATES IS THE LARGEST MARKET FOR ICELAND'S FISH PRODUCTS, WHICH ARE THE MAINSTAY OF THE NATION'S ECONOMY. OPPORTUNITIES EXIST FOR INCREASING THE U.S. SHARE OF THE ICELANDIC IMPORT MARKET. THE UNITED STATES ALSO PROVIDES ICELANDIC AIRLINES ACCESS TO THE AMERICAN MARKET ON A CONCESSIONARY BASIS WHICH IS ESSENTIAL TO THE AIRLINE'S OPERATION.

3. MISSION GOALS WHICH CAN BE EFFECTIVELY ADDRESSED BY THE POST INCLUDE A BROADENING OF ICELAND'S PERCEPTION OF THE U.S. BEYOND THE MILITARY SECURITY DIMENSION, STRENGTHENING ICELANDIC AWARENESS OF THE NEED FOR PRESERVING UNINTERRUPTED ACCESS BY U.S. FORCES TO BASE FACILITIES, STRENGTHENING ICELANDIC SUPPORT OF THE IDF AND CONTINUED ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP IN NATO, AND IMPROVING CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN ICELAND AND THE U.S. THE POST CAN ALSO ADDRESS THE OBJECTIVE OF INCREASING ICELAND'S ACTIVE

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PARTICIPATION IN OTHER ASPECTS OF THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE THAN BY CONFINING ITSELF TO JUST FISHERIES.

4. WHILE THE POST'S ROLE IS TO PROVIDE AN AMERICAN DIMENSION DISTINCT FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE U.S. MILITARY AT KEFLAVIK, IT IS ALSO EXPANDING ITS ALREADY SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE DIALOGUE ON MUTUAL SECURITY ISSUES WITH POLITICAL, MEDIA AND ACADEMIC LEADERS THROUGH POST-SPONSORED NATO TOURS, ATTENDANCE AT REGIONAL SECURITY SEMINARS BY KEY ICELANDERS, AND LECTURES AT THE CENTER AND THE UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND BY U.S. POLITICAL/ SECURITY EXPERTS.

5. BROADLY THE CLIMATE FOR THE POST'S PROGRAMMING IS GOOD. THE CULTURAL CENTER IS A RESPECTED MEMBER OF THE ACADEMIC AND INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY AND IS LOOKED UPON WITH GROWING REGARD BY POLITICAL LEADERS, THE NEWS MEDIA, AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY. ICA SHOULD CAPITALIZE ON THIS SITUATION IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE CENTER'S ROLE IN DEVELOPING A REAL TWO-WAY FLOW OF IDEAS BETWEEN EDUCATORS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES BUT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO INSURE THAT ARTISTS, ECONOMISTS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, BUSINESSMEN, AND THE MEDIA ARE INVOLVED IN THIS DIALOGUE. IN ORDER TO DO THIS, HOWEVER, INCREASED FUNDS WOULD HAVE TO BE PRO-

VIDED BY ICA TO PAY FOR ADDITIONAL IV GRANTS, SPEAKERS, AND THE
LIKE. COMMON LINKS THROUGH THE UN, OECD, AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL
FORA EXIST BUT NEED TO BE EMPHASIZED AND STRENGTHENED. THE
CLIMATE FOR THIS EXISTS AND ICA HAS BOTH THE MACHINERY AND THE
DESIRE TO ACCOMPLISH THIS GOAL.

6. AMBASSADOR HAS READ AND CONCURRED IN FOREGOING.
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